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**Research Materials/Source Documents
AIR FORCE ART**

FILE TITLE: Enlisted Medal of Honor Recipients Aircraft

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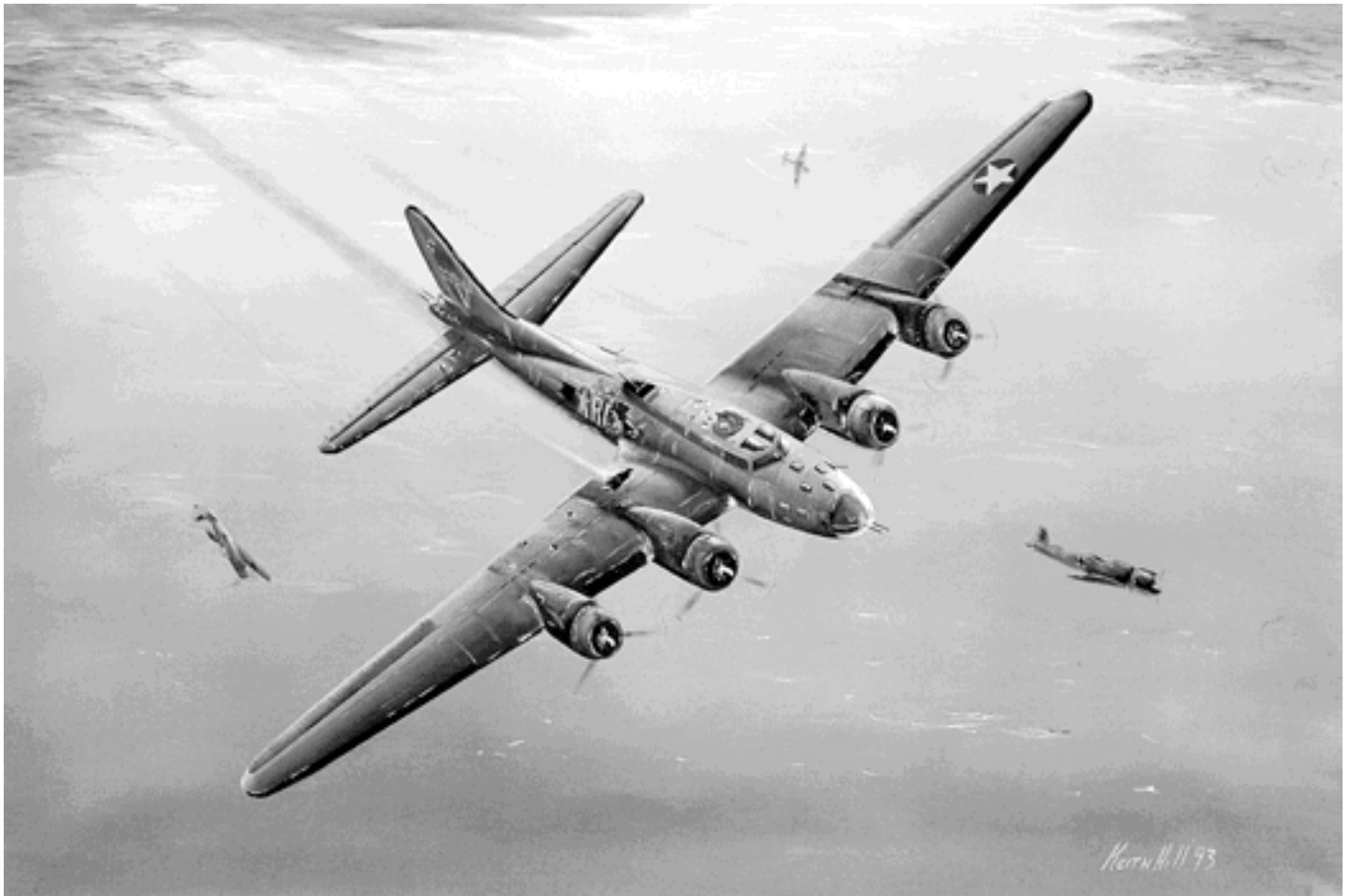
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“Homeward Bound from St. Nazaire”

by

Keith Hill

On May 1, 1943, Maynard H. “Snuffy” Smith’s B-17 was hit by anti-aircraft fire and set ablaze. The situation became so acute that 3 of the remaining crew bailed out. The aircraft was then attacked by a squadron of fighters. Sergeant Smith elected to remain at his post, administer first aid to the wounded tail gunner, man both waist guns until he drove the fighters off, then battle the intense flames. His loyalty to his aircraft and fellow crewmembers enabled the plane to safely return to England.



“A Signal of Hope”

by

Keith Hill

On December 20, 1943, Forrest L. “Woody” Vosler’s B-17, “Jersey Bounce Jr.,” was driven out of formation by anti-aircraft fire and immediately set-upon by enemy fighters. Although wounded early in the attack, Sergeant Vosler kept up a stream of defensive fire protecting the tail of the aircraft. Shortly thereafter a 20mm shell exploded, blinding him, and rendering the radio inoperative. Informed they were going to ditch, he worked entirely by touch to repair the radio and send a distress signal. When the aircraft did ditch, he managed to rescue a helpless crew member and keep him from slipping off the wing until other crew members could get him in the dinghy.



“Down at Denton Hill”

by

Keith Hill

On February 20, 1944, a 20mm shell exploded in the cockpit of B-17 “Ten Horsepower,” killing the co-pilot and rendering the pilot unconscious. Sergeant Archibald Mathies managed to fly the aircraft back to England and locate his base, surviving vicious attacks by enemy fighters along the way. Initially ordered to bail out. Sergeant Mathies and the navigator refused to abandon the helpless pilot. Sergeant Mathies was then given permission to land, but after two failed attempts at his airfield, he crashed while attempting a landing in a field near Denton, England. Sergeant Mathies and the navigator died in the crash; the pilot died later of his injuries.



“Just In Time”

by

Keith Hill

On April 12, 1945, a faulty phosphorus flare exploded in the cabin of B-29 “City of Los Angeles,” setting Henry E. “Red” Erwin ablaze. The smoke completely obscured the pilot’s vision, who then put the aircraft into a dive to prevent stalling. Without regard for his personal safety, Sergeant Erwin picked up the flare and headed for the co-pilot’s window. Along the way he had to work his way around the top gun turret and navigator’s table. Now completely engulfed in flame, he grouped toward the opening and threw the flare out. The smoke cleared and at 300 feet, the pilot was able to pull the aircraft out of its dive.



“A Knight To Remember”

by

Keith Hill

On February 24, 1969, an enemy mortar round detonated on the wing of AC-47 “Spooky 71.” The explosion wounded all occupants of the cargo compartment and tore an activated illuminating flare from the grasp of one crewmember. Airman John L. Levitow spotted the smoldering flare rolling around among 19,000 rounds of ammunition. He immediately recognized the danger and although suffering from over 40 shrapnel wounds managed to reach and throw himself on the burning device. The aircraft was out of control in a 30 degree right hand bank, but Airman Levitow managed to drag himself to the cargo door and heave the device through it. At that instant it detonated.